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Stories of Old
Oswego

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by Lida Scovil Penfield

STORIES OF OSWEGO

Tales of the early days told
to the children of the Oswego
Normal Training School



by
Lida Scovil Penfield

Made in the Normal Print Shop by the Students
May, 1919

It was over the great lake that the first white men sailed to this place. Who these white men were and why they came will be our next story.



The First White Men At Oswego

ONE day, in the middle of August, about two hundred fifty years ago, down the Oswego River came several canoes. In every canoe except one were Indians of the Onondaga tribe. In that single canoe sat two white men, one dressed in the rough clothes of a woodsman, the other wearing the long black robe of a missionary priest. On his bare feet were leather sandals, around his waist was a girdle of rope, and at his side hung a rosary and crucifix. These two are the very first white men to come where the river flows into the lake.

Along the river their boats glided easily, but out on the lake a heavy wind storm was driving the waves straight to the shore, and far up the river. The Indians in the leading canoe made a sign to the others that they could go no farther against the storm and turned their prow toward the river bank. The others followed, and soon they all had landed.

The Indians were especially careful of the man in the black robe, and he spoke to them in kind gentle words. The Indians built a little shelter for the men from poles and big pieces of bark. They brought food for them to eat and spread blankets for a bed. For two days that small company of Indians and two white men camped on the river bank, while out on the lake the storm raged and the waves broke in silvery spray along the shore.

The white man asked, "What is the name of this river?"

The Indians answered, "We call it 'Oshwakee'."

At last, on the third day the wind died down, the lake became smooth, and the sun came out. Then the Indians and two white men launched their canoes. Their paddles flashed in and out of the water, as they passed down the river, out into the lake. They guided their boats to the east, past Baldwin's Bay, around Four Mile Point, Pleasant Point and on and on

even to the great St. Lawrence River, the Indians guiding and guarding the two white men all the way back to Montreal.

Who were these white men, the first to come to Oshwakee, and why did they take that long journey to the fierce Onondagas? The man in the black gown was the French missionary, Father LeMoyne; the woodsman was Jean Baptiste. They came alone all the way from Montreal to make Christians of the Onondaga Indians. Father LeMoyne brought presents to their chiefs, so that the Iroquois would be friends to the French.


The Onondagas were pleased with the gifts and the kind words of Father LeMoyne. They said they would be glad to have the French come and live in their village. When Father LeMoyne was ready to go back to Montreal, the chiefs said, "We will show you the best way to go back to the big lake." So a party of them took their canoes and brought Father LeMoyne down the Oswego River.

The next year the French sent an officer with fifty white men and three missionaries to live among the Onondagas and keep them friendly. They came in wooden boats. They brought guns, swords, and five small cannon. They wanted to show the Indians how strong the white men were. It took them more than six weeks to come from Montreal to the mouth of the Oswego River. When they at last arrived their food was all used up. They entered the river and landed. They sent a messenger to tell the Onondagas that they were coming, and soon down the river came the Indians in their canoes to welcome their "French brothers" and take them to their village.

The Indians were amazed at the wonderful cannon. They gladly traded great quantities of fine furs for a knife or a gun, or china beads. But the French soon became afraid of their fierce neighbors, and in about two years they hastily built boats in secret, and hurried back to Montreal. The French explorers and missionaries were the first white men to visit Oshwakee, and some times the French traders came to get furs of Indians, but they never built their homes where the river flows into the lake.



The First House in Oswego

HE first house in Oswego was built by the English. The English and Dutch were friendly with the Iroquois. They traded with them, giving guns, powder, lead, knives, beads, and cloth in exchange for the pelts of beaver and other animals. The Onondagas showed them the Oswego River. At the mouth of the Oswego River was a fine place to trade with the Indian hunters, because it was easy for the Indians to come from the Iroquois country and from the west. At the mouth of the river on the west side was a small harbor, or cove, where boats were sheltered from storms by a neck of land.

Every spring the Dutch and English came down the Oswego River to trade with the Indians. Their boats were loaded with lead, powder, guns, knives, and blankets. The Indian canoes were filled with pelts. The best pelt was a soft, thick, warm, brown beaver skin.

The traders built log huts for themselves, a whole row of them along the bank of the river. In front of these huts the Indians set up their tents, and the trader would go to look at the pelts of the Indian and show the Indian what he had to exchange. The Indians liked not only the weapons for fighting, but they liked the iron and copper kettles of the English. Another wonderful thing to them was a looking glass. The traders brought plenty of these things.

The French had hoped to keep all of the trade on the lake to themselves. They were angry about the big trading post at Oswego. Now, the French charged more for their goods than the English did. When an Indian traded with a Frenchman he had to pay five beaver skins for a gun. An Englishman would trade him a gun for two beaver skins. It was so with everything. The French charged four beaver skins for eight pounds of powder. The English charged one beaver skin for eight pounds of powder. For blankets, shirts or stockings the French charged twice as much as the English asked.

The Indians came in great numbers to trade with the English, even from far away. Soon there were two rows of log huts

for the traders, with a wide space between for the posts of the Indian tents.

The logs and posts were cut from the thick forests. The canoes and boats crowded the river bank. Sometimes there were as many as three hundred traders and as many Indians here at the same time.

When the French saw how the English were taking all the trade they said, "We must drive the English from the lake." So they sent orders to the traders to go away. But the English stayed. When the French threatened to come with guns and drive them away, the English knew that the log huts were not strong enough to protect them from the French, so they determined to build a big strong house.

They made the walls of the lower story of stone, four feet thick, with long narrow slits instead of windows, through which they could safely fire their guns. The upper story was made of logs and projected over the lower story so that if an enemy tried to break down the door, the guard could shoot down at him from above. There was also in the upper story a row of narrow windows. The new house was 30 feet wide and 60 feet long.

The English built their new trading house near the lake, so that they could see who was coming over the lake, and near the river, so that the boats could be landed close to it in the cove. Masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths came to build this house. They also repaired and built boats. The blacksmiths made bolts and hinges. They repaired the weapons and tools.

When the trading season was over, the traders and builders went back to Albany with their pelts. To protect their new trading house during the winter the English sent a company of soldiers. When the weather was cold, they lived in the stone house but in the spring they set up their tents around about it. Beside the trading house stood a flag pole made from a tall forest tree, and from its top floated the English flag. The English named their trading post Oswego.


French traders heard about the strong stone house from the Indians. They sent men to see it. They thought the stone and log house would be hard to destroy. When the English soldiers came to Oswego, the French knew that they would be ready to

fight to keep the trading post for the English. The French planned to take a great many soldiers with guns and cannon to capture the stone house and drive away the English.

Our next story is about how the French came with an army to Oswego.



When the French came with an Army

HE English began to think that the stone trading house was not strong enough to protect the traders from the French, so they sent masons and carpenters to make a stone wall around the trading house. After this the house was called Fort Oswego.

The English saw that the trading house was well placed for trade, but that the hill on the east side of the river was a better place for a fort. So the carpenters set to work to build a fort on the east bank of the river. They cut down great trees and set the trunks up close together to form a strong wall. They piled the stone and earth about it to make it stronger, and dug a ditch around it, so that it would be hard for the enemy to come close to the wall. These walls of tree trunks were called stockades, and were often used in the old times. The walls of this fort were built like a star with eight points. Inside the stockades they built a big log house for the soldiers to live in, and they set their cannon at the loop holes in the wall. At the top of the flagstaff floated the English flag, and they named the new fort after the big lake; Fort Ontario it was called.

To the west of Fort Oswego there rose a hill, and the English commander knew he needed a fort there to protect Fort Oswego from attack on that side. So the carpenters cut more trees, and built a stockade on the hill to the west, just about where the stone house we call the Castle now stands at Seventh and Van Buren Street. In those days there were no streets, just a narrow path through the woods. This fort was built in a great hurry. The commander named it after the English King, Fort George.

But the soldiers, who knew what a poor defense it was, for fun sometimes called it Fort Rascal.

Now there were three forts: Fort Oswego, by the lake shore and the cove; Fort Ontario, on the eastern bluff, overlooking the mouth of the river; and Fort George, on the west hill, looking down on Fort Oswego. The English felt sure that the French would come by way of the lake.

If the English had built a good fleet of boats armed with cannon, they could have gone out on the lake and driven the French back, but they were so busy trading with the Indians that they said "Our three forts will protect us well enough this year. Next year we can build boats." So there were only a few small boats at Oswego to use for fighting.

Now the French King had determined to drive the English out, so he sent his bravest and best general to Canada with orders to destroy all the English forts. He was General Montcalm. He had made up his mind to capture Oswego. He gathered a large army of soldiers, Canadians, and Huron Indians. He had boats built — ever so many — to carry his troops in, and he had several ships of war, armed with cannon. They set out secretly. They travelled as much as they could in the dark. They always camped on a river so that if the English in boats came cruising along, they could not see the French camp. They came along the shore from the east planning to seize first Fort Ontario. If they could capture Fort Ontario on the high bluff, they could aim their cannon at Fort Oswego and force that fort to surrender.

The night before the attack the French camped at Baldwin's Bay and drew their boats out of sight all they could, but one of the small English boats discovered them and hurried back to give warning at the fort that the French were coming.

The commander at Fort Oswego was Col. Mercer. He sent Col. Littlehales to command Fort Ontario on the east bluff and Col. Philip Schuyler to command Fort George on the west hill. The English worked hard all that night getting ready for battle, and so did the French. The French dug a trench and threw up an earthen wall behind which they were to fire at Fort Ontario. All that next day the guns fired again and again from Fort On-

tario, and the French General Montcalm expected that he would have a hard time to capture Fort Ontario. But late that night some French scouts noticed that boats were crossing the river from the east side to the west side. In the boats were the red-coated English soldiers from Fort Ontario. Col. Littlehales had sent word to Col. Mercer that the French were bringing heavy cannon that would soon batter down the stockade walls of tree trunks. Col. Mercer sent back word to Col. Littlehales: "Spike your guns, throw your powder into the well, and bring your men to Fort Oswego."

When the French scouts hurried to tell their commander that the English had left Fort Ontario, General Montcalm promptly marched up and took possession of Fort Ontario. In the morning the white flag with the golden lilies of France floated from the walls of Fort Ontario, and a row of brass cannons pointed their black mouths straight at Fort Oswego. General Montcalm wanted to capture Fort George on the hill, to prevent Col. Schuyler and his men from helping Col. Mercer at Fort Oswego. So General Montcalm sent a captain with a large company of soldiers and Indians across the river, about a mile from the mouth, to make their way through the forest and attack Fort George before the English knew that the French were coming near them.

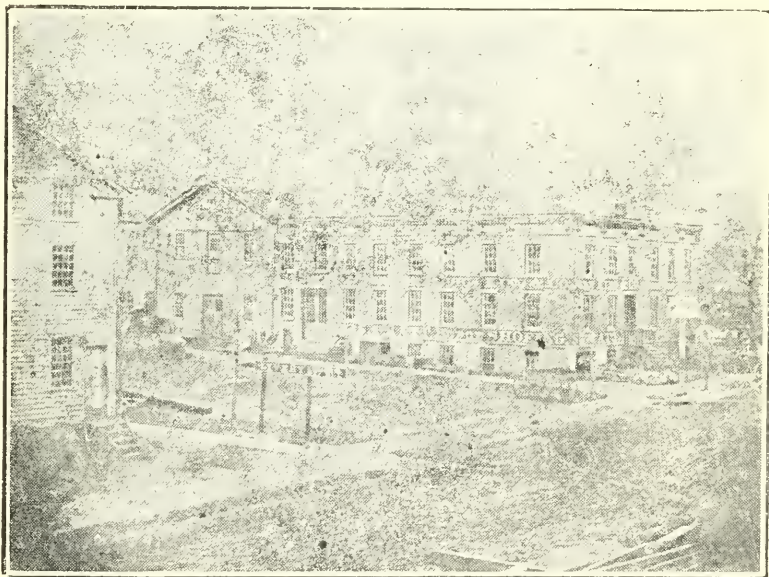
The French captain took his men along the east bank up the river, so that the English in Fort Oswego would not know of his plans. They crossed the river just about where the first dam now is. They plunged in up to their waists, up to their necks, so eager were they to accomplish their surprise attack.

The French cannons could send their deadly fire right over the new stone wall into Fort Oswego. A shot killed brave Col. Mercer. Just about that time, the Indians who were with the French began to shout their war cry, and Col. Littlehales, the one who left Fort Ontario and who was now commander of Fort Oswego, because Col. Mercer was dead, sent orders to Col. Schuyler to abandon Fort George and bring his men to Fort Oswego. This was done and soon the French took Fort George, where they ran up the white flag of France with its golden lilies.

Now the French held the two hill forts of Oswego. The English were discouraged. Col. Littlehales thought it was better



HARBOR 1875



AN OLD TIME VIEW IN OSWEGO

to surrender than to fight when the French had all the advantages on their side. Col. Littlehales sent a small company with a white flag of truce to Gen. Moncalm to say that the English would surrender. Then the firing stopped. The English Colonels gave their swords to the French General Montcalm. All the English soldiers laid down their guns. The English flag was pulled down from Fort Oswego, and the French flag put in its place. All the English were taken prisoners on French boats to Canada. The French took away all the tools and guns and food. They tore down the walls of the three forts; they burned all the store houses and huts, and left the famous trading place of the English in smouldering ruins.

Our next story tells how the great peace treaty was held at Oswego between the English Sir William Johnson and the Indian Chief, Pontiac.



The Council between Pontiac and Sir William Johnson at Oswego

FOR two years after the forts at Oswego were destroyed, the French were successful. The Iroquois Indians saw that the English were beaten at Oswego, so they believed that the French must be the stronger nation. The English gathered a large army to go against the French and capture some of their forts. Sir William Johnson was a man so friendly with the Iroquois Indians that they adopted him into their tribe. He spoke the Indian language, and the red men were always ready to listen to what he said. The English sent Sir William Johnson to ask the Iroquois chiefs to help the English capture the French forts. He said to the chiefs, "The French are friends to your enemies, the Hurons. If the French win this war, all your lands will be given to the Hurons. If you help us drive out the French, you shall be safe in your lands." The chief said, "We will help the English." They sent many Indians to fight with the English against the French.

The English came back to Oswego and began to build many

boats to carry their soldiers to the French forts. Soldiers and Indians came in large numbers to Oswego. When all was ready, they crossed the lake and captured a French fort. In that fort the English found many valuable things, including some of the very cannons that the French had carried away from Oswego.

The English captured the French forts, one after another. The brave General Montcalm was killed in battle. The French were beaten and gave up all Canada to the English.

The Indians who had helped the French wanted to continue to fight the English. There was in the western country a very great and powerful chief named Pontiac. He was an enemy to the English. Sir William Johnson sent soldiers to fight against Pontiac, and at last Pontiac knew that he would have to give up to the English. Sir William Johnson sent word to him, "The French have given up Canada to the English. The English do not want to have war. They want to have peace with their red brothers." Pontiac replied, "We see that our brothers, the French, have left us to fight alone. We, too, want peace. Tell your chief that Pontiac will come to meet him. Take to him this pipe. Pontiac will come to smoke this pipe with Sir William Johnson as a sign of peace between the English and the Indians of the far West."

In the spring Sir William Johnson sent word, "Let Pontiac and his chiefs come to meet Sir William Johnson and his chiefs where the river flows into the great lake. There they will hold a council, talk over matters and smoke the pipe of peace." Pontiac sent back a belt of wampum and the message "I will come with my people."

Ten years after Montcalm destroyed Oswego, Pontiac came with his warriors of the West, gliding in their canoes over Lake Ontario to the mouth of the Oswego River. Here on the bluff the English had rebuilt Fort Ontario, from which cannon boomed a welcome to the plumed red men of the west. Waiting to receive them were the chiefs of the Iroquois, their friend Sir William Johnson, and many English officers and traders.

The day was fair and warm. The council was held on the west bank of the river. A canopy of evergreens had been set up as a

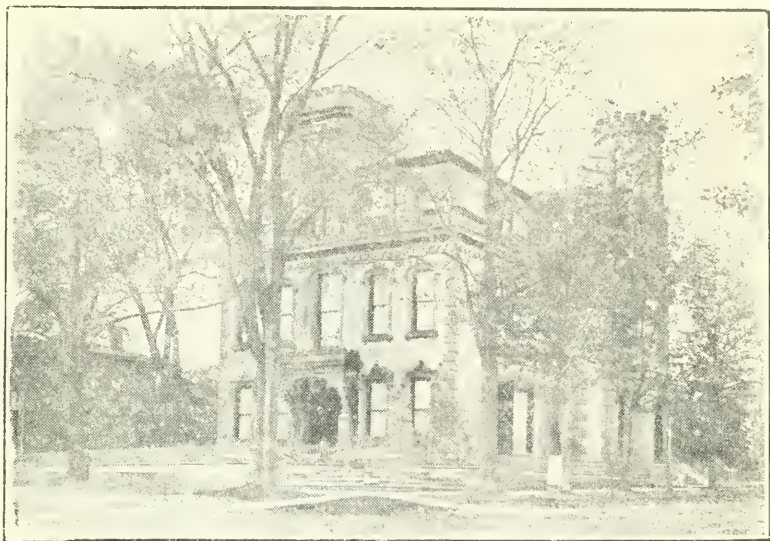
shield from the sun. There stood Sir William Johnson, dressed in uniform and wrapped, like an Indian, in a red blanket bordered with gold lace. He held out his hand in greeting, and the haughty chief Pontiac grasped it firmly.

On the first day, Sir William gave to the Western chiefs belts of wampum as a sign of friendship. The great peace pipe of Pontiac was lighted and passed solemnly among all the company. Every man took a whiff and passed it to his neighbor. The next day Sir William Johnson made a great speech. He said, "My children, peace is best. In peacetimes the traders will come once more to you with goods. The great English king, your father, will attend to your wants. Children, by this belt I turn your eyes to the sun rising where you will find your brothers, the English."

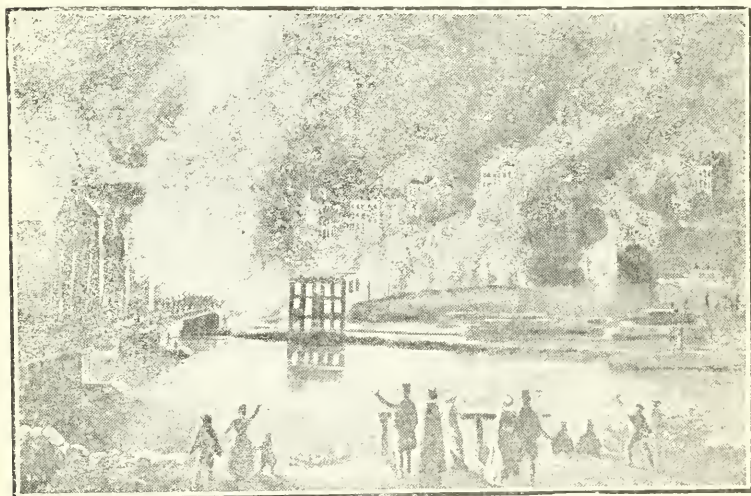
The third day Pontiac spoke. "Father, when our great father of France was in this country, I held him fast by the hand. Now that he has gone out of the land, I take the English father. Here is a belt to strengthen the friendship between us." Sir William gave each chief a medal inscribed, "A pledge of peace and friendship with Great Britain." So with many friendly words and gifts the council came to an end. The Western Indians launched their canoes, and chanting their wild songs, paddled away over the lake to the land of the setting sun. Sir William Johnson and the Iroquois went to their homes by way of the river.

The English still own Canada, but today Oswego is an American city. Our next story will tell how the stars and stripes came to float above Fort Ontario.

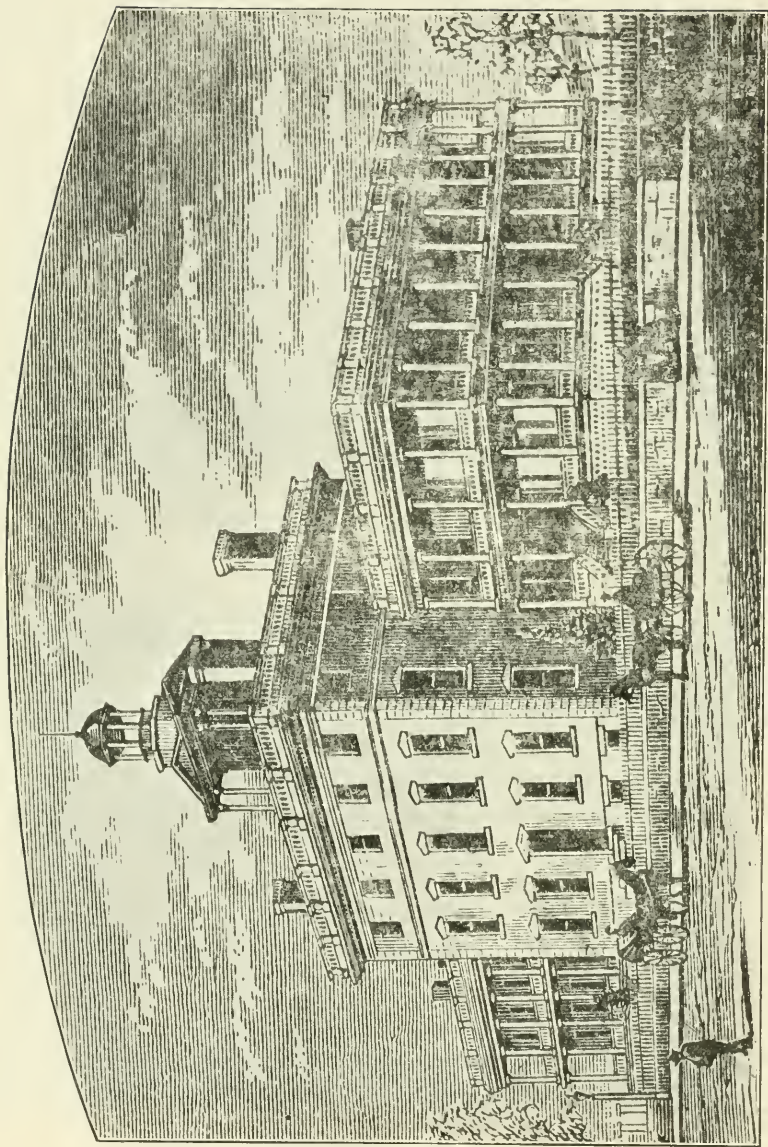




ALLEN CASTLE -- FORT GEORGE



FIRE IN OLD OSWEGO



FIRST OSWEGO NORMAL SCHOOL

How Fort Ontario Became American



AFTER the French gave up Oswego to the English at the end of the war, the English did two things: they rebuilt Fort Ontario, and opened trade. The commander at the new fort was, for a time, Major Duncan. He was a fine man. He treated the young officer as if they were his sons or pupils, though he was like a stern father and a strict teacher.

The fort was a large place built entirely of earth and logs. The barracks, where the men lived, were of wood, cold and comfortless. The quantities of wood used in these buildings had been cut from the forests round about, and a wide space had thus been cleared near the fort. Major Duncan lived in a queer wooden house set on wheels, that he had ordered built for himself. It could be moved about wherever he wanted it to stand. There were two rooms, his bedroom and his sitting room. The walls were hung with deer skins, and rugs of bearskin covered the floors. In his sitting room he had books, globes, flutes, dumbbells, and chess boards. The young men came there to study and practice. He had books on war, history, geography, and arithmetic. Through the long winter he set the men to studying. Every day Major Duncan spent two hours examining the students, a few at a time. This was the first school we know about at Oswego.

In the spring Major Duncan planned to use the fertile cleared land around the fort. He laid out a vegetable garden and a bowling green, or smooth lawn, where men could play tenpins and other games. First, he had the men build a palisade, or fence; then they dug up the ground and planted it with beans, peas, and Indian corn. The garden was beautiful. Wherever there was a mulberry, wild plum, or cherry tree, it was left standing to blossom and bear fruit. They built a summer house in a tree. They made a fish pond, and gravel walks. The vegetables were fine and big. Soon they also had pigs, poultry, and even cows. All these things furnished good food for the soldiers, and this was the first farm and garden at Oswego.

But trouble was coming. The people in America did not like the way the King of England treated them, so they rebelled,

and said, "We will make an American nation and govern ourselves." Thus the war of the Revolution began. Some Americans favored the English king; they were called Tories. The son of Sir Willam Johnson was a Tory. The Indians joined with the Tories. Many Tories came by way of the Oswego River to go to Canada. The English still held Oswego. One winter General George Washington sent Col. Willet with 400 American soldiers to capture Fort Ontario. Their Indian guide lost his way. They came out from the forest at last on a hill overlooking the gardens and the fort. That hill was Oak Hill. They tried to capture quietly some English soldiers who came out to cut wood, but two escaped and gave the alarm at the fort, so Col. Willett and his men had to turn back without capturing Fort Ontario.

The Americans won the war of the Revolution and made a new nation called the United States of America. England kept Canada, and she kept some of the lake forts on the American side a long time after the war was over. At last, in July, 1796, England agreed to give up Fort Ontario. American soldiers came down the river; they were received with great politeness by the English officers who turned over to them the fort and the beautiful gardens, all in fine order. The English flag was hauled down from the flag pole, and the stars and stripes went up to the top to show to all the world that, from that time on, Fort Ontario was to be American.

Our next story will tell how the village of Oswego grew where the river flows into the lake.



How Oswego Village Grew



SOON after the end of the Revolutionary War, men began to build their homes where the Oswego River flows into Lake Ontario. The first man who brought his family here was Neil McMullin. They came down the river in a boat. They brought with them a frame house ready to set up, beams, door, windows, and all. Rankin McMullin, his little son, was the first child born in this house, which stood by the river bank

where now Seneca Street is. The next family to arrive were the McNairs. They came across the lake from Canada. Matthew McNair, the father, was a Scotchman who had learned in Scotland how to build ships.

Mr. McMullin and Mr. McNair earned their living by shipping goods on the lake and river. Matthew McNair built boats.

Daniel Burt was another early settler. He had several sons who came with him. Bradner Burt built the first school house, at the southeast corner of West Third and Seneca Streets. This school house was also used for a church, and for a court house. Lumber was needed for houses. Bradner Burt built a saw mill. Joel Burt ran the ferry across the river from the village on the west side to the few houses on the east side. Joel was the first postmaster in Oswego, and the first mail man was Onundiaga, an old Indian chief of the Onondagas. Once a week he started on foot from Salt Point, as Syracuse was called in those days, and walked forty miles, carrying the bag of mail for Oswego. The next day he would walk back again to Salt Point, with the letters from Oswego.

Soon a blacksmith came to settle in the little cluster of log houses. A hatter, a shoemaker, a cabinet maker, all found plenty of work. A grist mill to grind flour was built. A small tavern, or hotel was opened. The government built a stone pier to make the harbor larger, and on the high bank by Fort Ontario the first lighthouse was built. The tall stone lighthouse on the pier was built a little later.

Alvin Bronson was a man who had a large business among the ships at Oswego. He built a stone warehouse by the river. He also built a beautiful stone house for himself that still stands at the corner of Cayuga and West Fifth Streets. Wherever you see a big square stone house, or a stone mill, you may be sure that it was built when Oswego was a village.

The first church was built in the middle of the West Park. It was the First Presbyterian Church, and the people were very proud of it, because it was beautiful and because it had a bell in the steeple. There was no fire department in the village. Every house had buckets to use for fire. When the cry of "Fire, fire!" rang out, every man caught up his buckets and ran.

The boys helped too. From the burning building the men formed in long lines to the river bank, or to the nearest well, and passed the buckets, filled with water, from hand to hand, up to the fire. This was hard work, and often the house or store would burn to the ground, but it was the best the villagers could do.

One cold, snowy night late in the fall, there came the shout of "Fire!" Men rushed out to find that the beautiful First Church was all in flames. They formed a bucket line to the river, and to the nearest wells, but the wind fanned the flames furiously, and the water froze to the hands and clothes of the bucket men. They worked like beavers, but it was no use; the roof went down with a crash, and then the steeple, blazing like a great torch, toppled and fell. The bell rang out for the last time as it dropped into the glowing mass of embers, and all the people looked sadly at the ruins of their church.

Out in the lake, tossed about by the waves, was a small vessel. The captain was trying to make Oswego harbor. The wind drove the boat out of her course. The snow, falling thickly, hid the beacon light. The captain said to himself, "If we cannot find the harbor, we shall be wrecked!" All at once, a glow in the sky caught his eye. It grew brighter and brighter. The captain guided his boat towards the glowing light, and brought safely into the harbor his boat and crew of eight men. They were saved by the burning torch of the church.

When the canal was built along the Oswego River, boats came through the locks instead of going around the portage at the falls. Commerce on the canal and lake made Oswego a thriving village. A bridge was built. Roads were opened to Syracuse, Watertown, Rome, and Auburn, over which many people travelled in stage coaches. At last the first railroad was built to Oswego, and when the great iron monster of an engine came snorting and clanging into town everybody was at the station to cheer. That same year Oswego became a city.

Our next story is about a discovery that made Oswego famous.



How Starch made Oswego Famous

IN the year when Oswego saw the first engine come puffing in over the new railroad tracks from Syracuse; in the year when Oswego changed from a village into a city in the year 1848, a man who had made a wonderful discovery came to open in Oswego a factory where he could make large quantities of this discovery. This discovery can be used in several ways. Men who made calicoes and cotton cloths can use it to make the goods stiff. Women can use it in their homes to make the freshly washed clothes crisp and smooth when they were ironed. Cooks can use it to make delicious puddings, or to thicken gravies and sauces. This substance had been made from potatoes, wheat, and rice, but this man discovered a way to make it from a grain that grows abundantly in America, a grain that the Indians used and planted. This man had discovered how to make starch from corn, and this is the way he found out.

Thomas Kingsford was a poor young man who worked in a factory. He knew about making starch from potatoes and wheat. He knew, too, that there was starch in Indian corn, so he kept trying to find a way to get rid of the part of the grain that was not starch. He soaked corn meal; he ground the grain up fine, he cooked it, he mixed it with chemicals, he dried it, but he could not get the smooth white powder that would make good starch. At the back of his house he had a room with pans, kettles, and tubs in it, where he used to experiment with corn when he came home from work. His wife used to watch him. At first she said "Why do you take so much trouble?" He answered, "When I find starch, we shall be rich." She believed that some day he would surely discover the way, because he was so patient and worked so earnestly.

One night, after he had tried everything he could think of, he was discouraged and tired. He said to his wife, "It is no use, I shall have to give up," and he emptied all the pans and kettles into one tub. The mixture looked all milky and frothy. His wife said, "Dont throw it out yet. Let it stand over night, and perhaps the starch will settle by morning."

Early the next day they both went to look, and what do you think they found? On the bottom of the tub there was a layer of smooth fine paste. Mr. Kingsford carefully poured off the liquid, and there was the reward of his patience, and of the faith of his good wife. That was the first Kingsford's Corn Starch, and it proved to be the best kind of starch.

Mr. Kingsford took for a partner his son, Thomson Kingsford, and together they came to build their factory in Oswego. Why did they choose Oswego? There were two good reasons: first, the fine water power of the river to turn the wheels of the factory; second, the many ways of sending the starch to other places, by boat, and by train. The starch was so good that everybody wanted to buy it, and soon it was sent all over the world. The Kingsford Starch Factory was for many years the largest starch factory in the world.

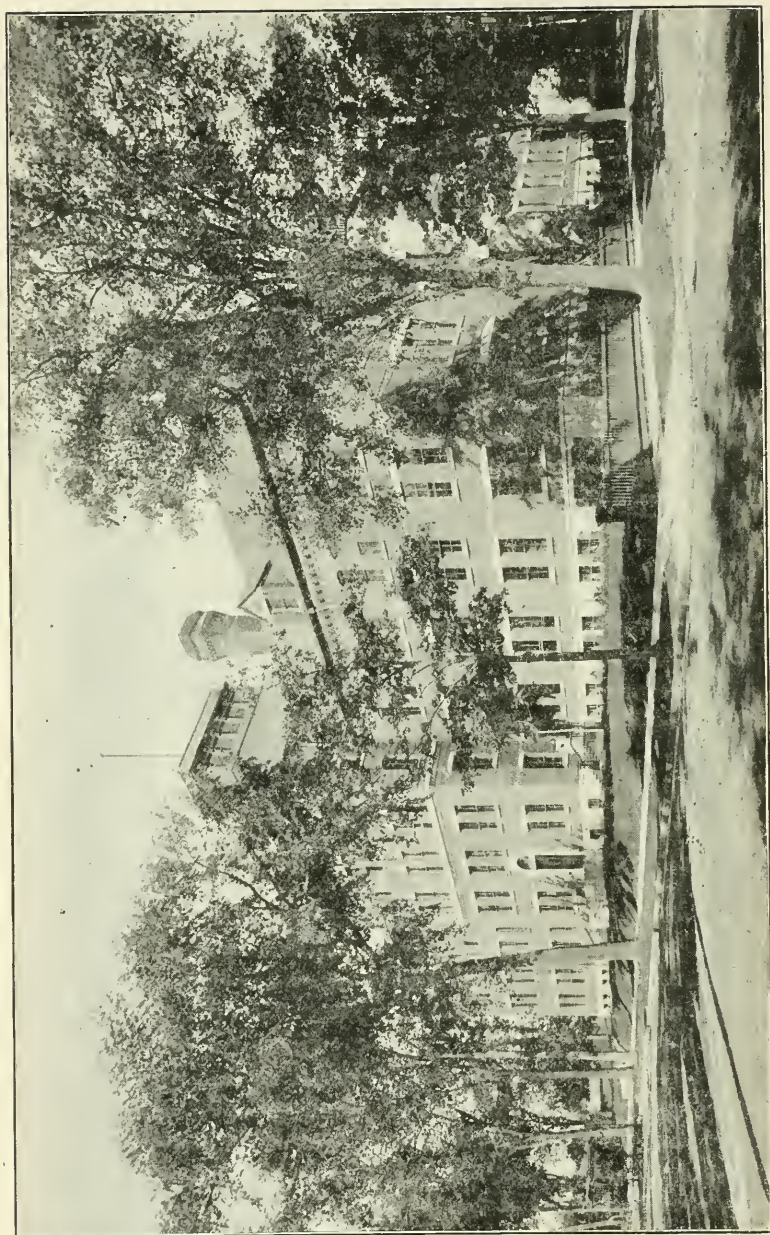
Mr. Kingsford called his invention Kingsford's Oswego Corn Starch. Where ever it was sold, people saw the name Oswego. Thus Kingsford's Starch made Oswego famous.

Our last story is about the school that has made Oswego famous, and the man who founded it.





THE SOUTH VIEW OF OSWEGO ON LAKE ONTARIO, 1767



SECOND OSWEGO NORMAL SCHOOL

The School that Made Oswego Famous



PEOPLE who live far away often say to visitors from Oswego, "Oswego? Oh, that is where the Normal School is; — the Oswego State Normal School." Why is it that they have heard of our school? How long has our school been in Oswego? Who started it? How did it grow? Why are we proud of it?

When the first lighthouse was built in Oswego, a year after the first bridge was built across the Oswego river, in 1823, there was born in a small wooden house at Perry, New York, a boy. That boy was Edward Austin Sheldon. He grew up in the country. In his home his mother spun and wove the cloth for their clothes, made their candles from tallow, their soap from fats, and their sugar from maple sap. His father raised all the food they had. The harvesting and threshing were all done by hand. He went to school, but the teachers were so rough and harsh that he never enjoyed studying. He loved to know about things, and learned a great deal in the fields and woods. When he was seventeen years old he had a fine teacher who taught him what wonderful knowledge is stored in books, and prepared him for college.

In the year before Oswego became a city, 1847, Edward Sheldon came to Oswego to work for a man who had a green house and raised trees and shrubs.

In those days, there were no free public schools. Only those parents who had money to pay for the lessons could send their children to school. In Oswego there were ever so many poor children who had no chance to learn to read and write. Some of them had no father or mother, and they ran about the streets, dirty, ragged, cold, and neglected. Edward Sheldon loved children, and it made him sorry to see any little ones neglected and in want. He made friends with some of the boys and girls, visited their homes and thought how he could help them. He found 1500 persons who could neither read nor write. He began to talk to some of the men and women about opening a school for these children.

Edward Sheldon was the first teacher of this school for the

poor boys and girls. There was a big wooden building on West Second Street, where the engine house now stands. In the basement of this hall he opened school for the one hundred thirty wild, ignorant boys and girls who came to be taught. He was most kind to them and they loved him dearly. They used to run to meet him and crowd about him. People called this first class "the ragged school."

When men saw how much good "the ragged school" did, it was easier for Dr. Sheldon to persuade them to have free schools in Oswego, and in a few years the free public schools were opened. Mr. Sheldon was made the first superintendent of public schools in Oswego.

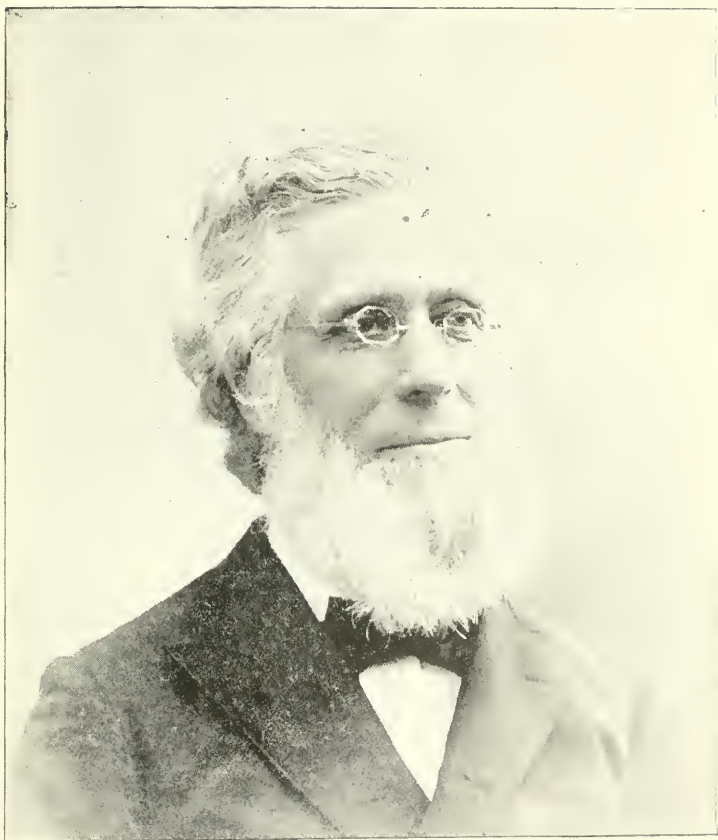
He soon found that he needed more good teachers. Away over in Europe there were other men who loved to teach little children. One of these was Pestalozzi, who taught children to study the real things around them, just as you are doing, instead of trying to get all they knew from books. When Dr. Sheldon found that he needed such teachers to help him, he made up his mind to open a class to train teachers. He sent to England for a lady who knew all about the right kind of teaching. Her name was Miss Jones. That first training class for teachers was so successful that it grew into our Normal School, and New York State took charge of it.

Year after year, young men and women have been trained here to be good teachers, and they have gone to teach in all parts of the United States. When people would ask, "Where did you learn to be such a good teacher?" The answer always would be, "I was trained in the Oswego State Normal School." Thus the name of Oswego was made famous by the school founded by Edward Austin Sheldon.

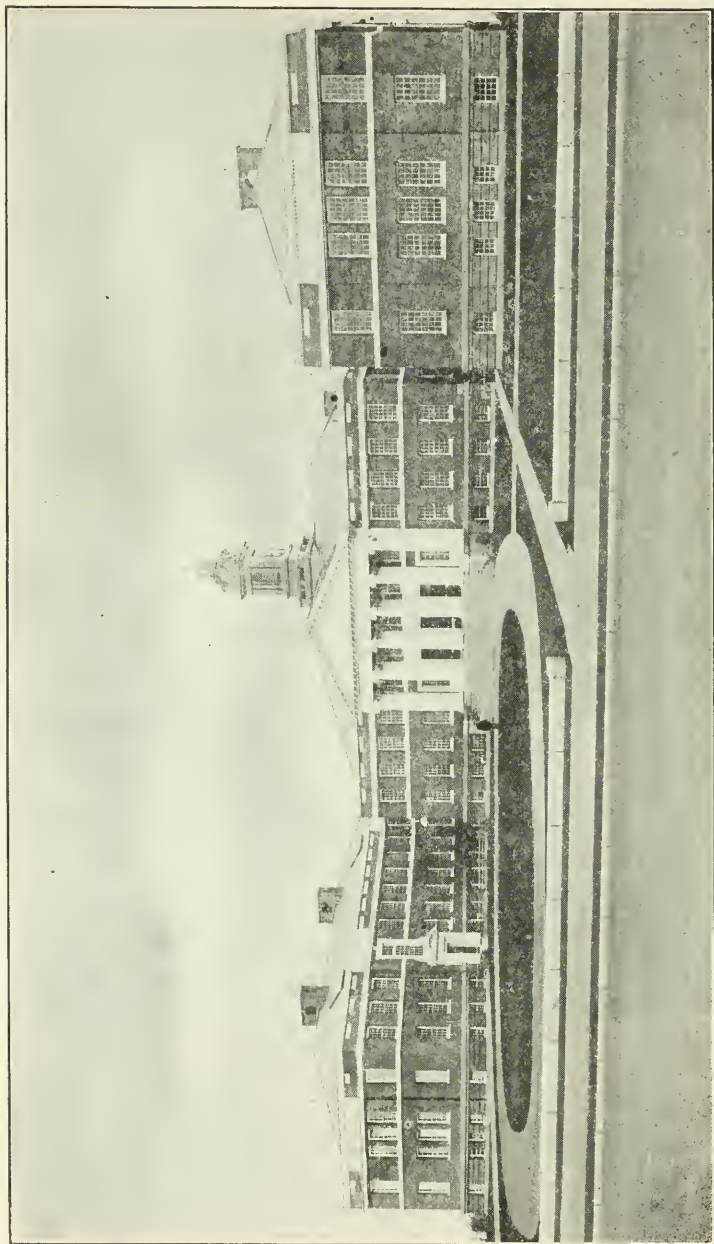
When we look at Dr. Sheldon's portrait we can understand why the children loved him. We honor him for the good he did.

Dr. Sheldon was the first principal. Dr. I. B. Poucher, Hermann Krusi, Miss Cooper, and Dr. Mary V. Lee were four of the teachers who helped him.

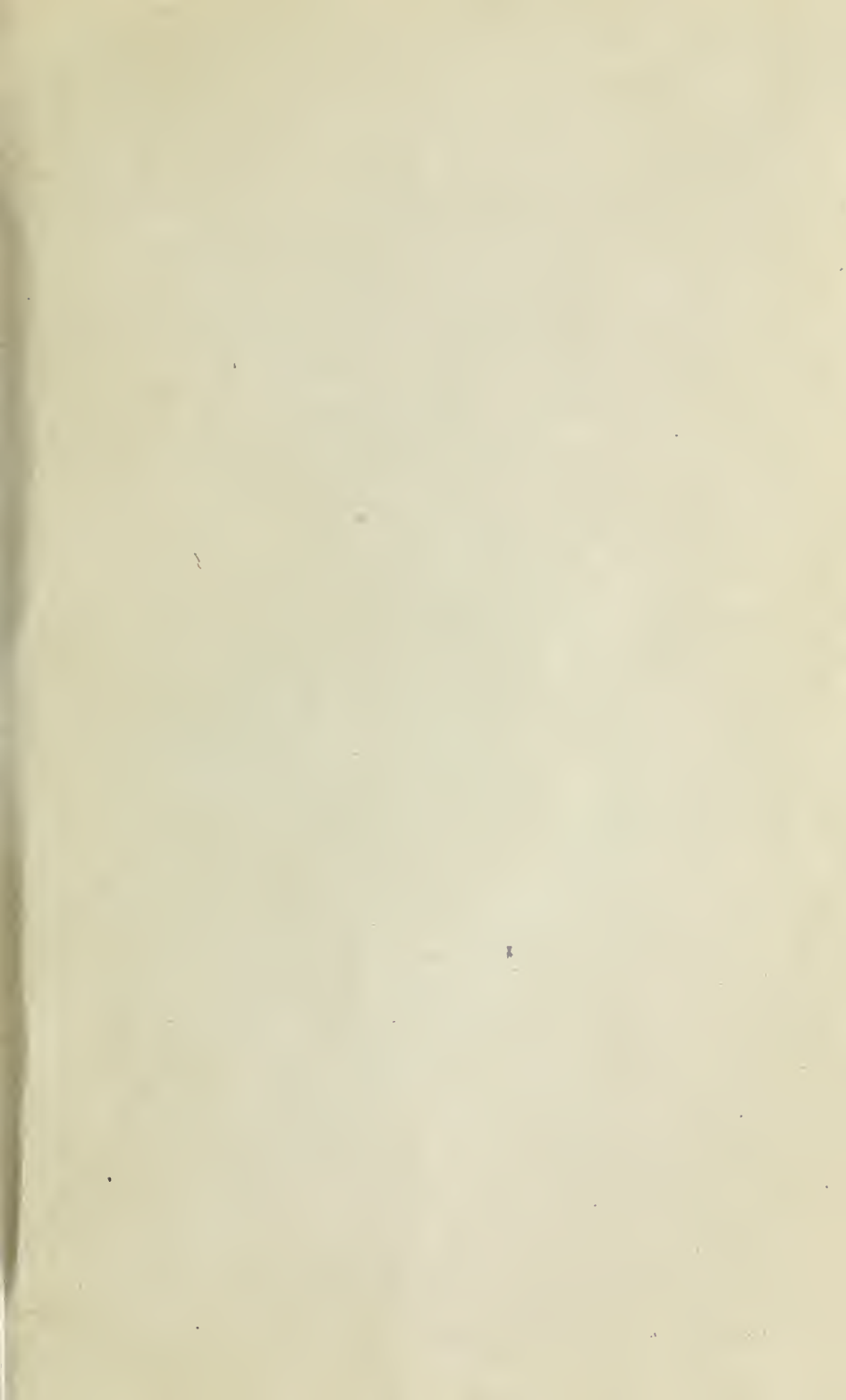
We love to remember that he founded "the ragged school," that he helped to make the schools of Oswego free to all the children of the city, and that for so many years he devoted his strong beautiful life to training teachers in our Oswego Normal School.



EDWARD AUSTIN SHELDON



THIRD OSWEGO NORMAL SCHOOL



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